

3.12 THE STORY OF RUTH

RUTH 1-4

Once there lived a woman named Naomi. She and her husband and two sons decided to move from where they lived in Bethlehem to another country called Moab. In Moab, the two sons found girls they wanted to marry. One son married a girl named Orpah; the other son married a girl named Ruth.

Naomi's husband had died before their sons had gotten married, but she was happy to still have the sons and their wives to keep her company. After ten years, her two sons died. Then, Naomi was very sad. She wanted to go back to Bethlehem. She told her sons' wives to return to their families. But Ruth wanted to stay with Naomi. Ruth told Naomi, "I will go wherever you go. I will live wherever you live. Your God will be my God. And I will die wherever you die." Thus, Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem together.

In Bethlehem, it was time to harvest rice. Like today, rice was their main food. Jewish law said that farmers cannot harvest the corners of their fields so that the poor people could come and get it and have food to eat. Also, if a stalk of rice was dropped on the ground, you must leave it for the poor. That way, poor people could live. Naomi had a relative named Boaz who owned a big rice field. She told Ruth to go to his field and gather the rice left behind so they would have food to eat.

Ruth went to the field belonging to Boaz and began to collect the unharvested rice. Boaz liked Ruth and wanted to protect her. He wanted her to have the very best of what was left over from his crop. He knew she had come back to Bethlehem to be with Naomi instead of staying in Moab with her own family. He told her, "You will be given a full reward by the Lord God of Israel."

Naomi was so happy Ruth had met Boaz and was getting rice from his field. Naomi thought maybe Ruth and Boaz should get married.

Boaz thought he would like to marry Ruth, but there was a Jewish custom that said a closer relative had first choice to marry Ruth if he wanted to. Boaz then asked the closer relative if he would like to marry her. The man told Boaz he already had a wife! Boaz was happy. He was free to marry Ruth.

Boaz and Ruth got married. Everyone was happy, including Naomi. After a while, Ruth had a baby. She named him Obed. After years went by, Obed became the father of Jesse. After more years went by, Jesse became the father of David. And David became a man who loved God very much. We will learn more about David later!

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1) Naomi and her husband moved from Bethlehem to Moab with their sons. Their sons met and married girls from that country of Moab.
- 2) Naomi's husband died. Then, ten years later, her sons died. She was very sad. She had only her sons' wives left. She told them she had to go back to Bethlehem, but for them to go back to their families.
- 3) Ruth wanted to stay with Naomi. She told her she wanted to be with her and live wherever she lived and die wherever she died. Ruth said, "Your God will be my God."
- 4) Ruth and Naomi went back to Bethlehem. Ruth began picking up the leftover barley from a field belonging to Naomi's relative named Boaz.
- 5) Boaz liked Ruth and decided to marry her. Everyone was happy. Ruth and Boaz had a baby and named him Obed. Obed had a son later on and named him Jesse. Jesse had a son later on and named him David. David became a man who loved God very much.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where was Naomi from?
- 2) Where did Naomi's sons meet their wives?
- 3) When Naomi's sons both died, what did she tell her sons' wives to do?
- 4) What did Ruth decide to do?
- 5) How did Ruth meet her husband, Boaz?
- 6) How was David related to Ruth and Boaz?

ANSWERS:

- 1) Naomi was from Bethlehem.
- 2) Naomi's sons met their wives in Moab.
- 3) After her sons died, Naomi told their wives to go back to their families.
- 4) Ruth decided to stay with Naomi. They went back to Bethlehem together.
- 5) Ruth met Boaz when she began to pick up leftover barley in his field.
- 6) Ruth and Boaz were the parents of Obed; Obed was the father of Jesse; Jesse was the father of David.